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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 000207

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TAGS: PREL PTER PINR CJUS KPAO KCRM EI

SUBJECT: CIRA/RIRA TERRORISTS: BOMBS FOR HIRE?

Classified By: DCM JONATHAN S. BENTON, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B), (D)

Summary

¶1. (C) Summary. Over the last year, Dublin criminal and drug gangs upgraded from guns to pipe bombs in their quest for turf supremacy. The police suspect that drug barons are now hiring the skills of the Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA) and Real IRA (RIRA) explosives experts to target and intimidate rivals. The police also believe that CIRA and RIRA members are becoming increasingly involved in criminal activity. To date, police have arrested three men and charged them with possession of explosive substances as well as with membership in an unlawful organization under the Offenses Against the State Act. The evidence indicates that individuals in CIRA and RIRA are driven by financial, not political motives. There is no evidence of Provisional IRA (PIRA) involvement in the deployments of these bombs, according to police. End Summary.

Recent Increase of Explosive Devices in Dublin

¶2. (U) Since January 2005, criminal elements in the city of Dublin deployed at least six potentially lethal explosive devices and one hoax bomb. On February 8 and 10, two devices exploded and caused minor damage, but no injuries. Most of the bombs were relatively simple in design: a pipe of gun barrel metal, gun powder, a timer and detonator, and nails or pellets. The deployment of these devices was as follows:

--In January 2005, police caught two men in the act of planting a device under a Dublin residence. The two men were arrested, charged with possession of explosive substances as well as with membership of an unlawful organization under the Offenses Against the State Act and are due to be sentenced. (Note: Membership in the CIRA, RIRA, and PIRA is illegal in the Republic of Ireland. End Note).

--In October, police found a device that was planted in west Dublin.

--In November, police found a device in a car on a north Dublin road near the airport.

--In December, police found a device in a car at a toll bridge on a major motorway. In the ensuing investigation, police arrested a man and charged him with possession of explosive substances and membership of an unlawful organization. According to the police, the man intended to use the bomb against another criminal element in Dublin.

--On February 8, a device placed under a car at a north Dublin car dealer exploded after it fell from the car.

--On February 10, a device was planted under a car at a residence in northeast Dublin and later exploded.

--On February 15 a hoax bomb was planted under a car belonging to a National Bureau of Criminal Investigation officer.

¶3. (C) According to Detective Inspector Michael Larkin,

police are confident that they know who is responsible for either making the explosives or training others in the craft. He added that they have identified all the perpetrators and that further arrests are pending the collection of more substantial evidence.

Targeting Rival Gangs

¶ 4. (C) According Larkin, members of criminal and drug gangs are the intended targets of these bombs. Larkin said that the police suspect that drug barons are hiring the skills of the Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA) and Real IRA (RIRA) explosives experts to target and intimidate rivals. In the past two years, Dublin has witnessed an increase in gang shootings, and Larkin suspects that that the gangs are now upgrading from guns to bombs for sensational effect. He added that some of the bomb targeting is for retribution in turf wars or disputes over money.

¶ 5. (C) The officer targeted with a hoax bomb on February 10 belongs to the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the agency charged with investigations into major criminal activity. However, Larkin ruled out the involvement of CIRA and RIRA in this case.

No Political Motives

¶ 6. (C) Larkin commented that the recent spate of bomb discoveries and their linkages to CIRA and RIRA elements does not imply political motivations. He said that the evidence points to individuals from these groups who, though they still espouse Republican ideals, are selling their skills

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simply for profit or to ratchet up their criminal activities. Larkin added that there is no evidence to support involvement by Provisional IRA (PIRA) elements and that if the PIRA had returned to violence, the bombs would demonstrate a higher level of expertise and would not have fallen so easily into police hands. Instead, he claimed that the majority of these bombs were made by young criminal thugs who use their status as CIRA and RIRA members to add an extra level of intimidation to their targets.

Comment

¶ 7. (C) Comment: The police are treating the investigations into the deployments of these bombs as a criminal matter instead of as terrorism. The evidence points to these bombs being produced for monetary gain vice political motivations.
End Comment.

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